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Innovator in Residence: Oh Yeon-ho

Yeon-ho Oh
OhmyNews

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Journalism's 'Innovator in Residence' Oct. 12-14, 2010, is Oh Yeon-Ho

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Oh Yeon-ho

Oh Yeon-ho, CEO and founder of the citizen journalism website OhmyNews, will be the second Innovator in Residence at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism and Mass Communications. He will visit Oct. 12 to 14.

Operating under the motto "Every citizen is a reporter," OhmyNews receives between 200 and 250 stories each day from 100 countries worldwide. Launched in 2000 in Seoul, South Korea, OhmyNews began by working with 727 citizen journalists. Today, it is an international media outlet with nearly 62,000 citizen reporters and 70 full-time editors and reporters.

"OhmyNews, one of the first citizen journalism sites, is an excellent example of innovation in the media world," said Gary Kebbel, dean of the journalism college.

"The purpose of the Innovators in Residence program is to bring innovators and entrepreneurs to the journalism college to present students with unsolved problems," he added. "Students offer solutions and ideas and hear feedback from the entrepreneur, giving students an opportunity to be critiqued and learn to solve real problems in 21st century media."

In addition to founding OhmyNews, Oh conducted comprehensive interviews in 1994 with the survivors of the 1950 No Gun Ri massacre during the Korean War, a story the Korean press ignored. It wasn't until six years after Oh's story appeared in the liberal monthly magazine, Mal, that the mainstream conservative Korean news media wrote stories on the massacre committed by American soldiers -- and then only after Associated Press correspondents won a Pulitzer Prize for a series of 1999 reports about it.

Oh has published several independent books and collections about his experience in journalism in South Korea. His latest book, "OhmyNews Story," chronicles his five-year journey launching OhmyNews and earning international recognition.

In 2000 OhmyNews was named the 10th most influential media operation in Korea by a Sisa Journal survey; it was listed as the sixth most influential operation by the same survey in 2004 and 2005. In 2007 the Missouri School of Journalism recognized Oh with the Missouri Honor Media award for his pioneering work in engaging citizens as journalists for democracy.

In 1988, Oh earned a degree in Korean literature from Yonsei University in Seoul. After graduating, he worked as a staff reporter for Mal and later became Mal's correspondent in Washington, D.C. While in the United States, Oh earned a master's degree from Regent University in Virginia Beach, Va., in 1998. In 2005, he completed a doctoral degree in journalism from Sogang University in Seoul.

Writer: Marilyn Hahn